

# Eclectic Magazine.—Supplement.

SEPTEMBER, 1900.

## READINGS FROM NEW BOOKS.

### LEGATION STREET IN PEKING.\*

At the close of the war in 1860, the humiliated government, accepting the presence of foreign envoys at Peking as a necessary evil, offered the Summer Palace inclosure for a great diplomatic compound, and then a tract of land immediately outside the west wall for a foreign concession. Sir Harry Parkes led in emphatically repudiating these offers, and the Liang-Kung-fu (palace of the Duke of Liang) was bought for a British legation, Duke Tsin's fu becoming the French legation. A fu always has green tiled roofs, stone lions before the five-bayed entrance gate, and four courts and pavilions beyond, and a fu is assigned to each Imperial son outside of the succession. Imperial descendants move down one degree in rank with each generation and when the third descendant has reached the level of the people again, the fu reverts to the crown. The occupants of fuses may have eunuchs attached to their establishments, and to the remotest generation they may wear the yellow girdle of Imperial descent. There have been yellow-belted teachers, and even domestic servants in foreign employ, starvelings of Imperial ancestry who took their few dollars with plebeian gratitude.

All the legations are in that quarter of the Tartar city where Mongols, Ti-

betans, Koreans, and other tribute-bearing visitors were always lodged, and where the Mongols still have a street to themselves. The French, German, Japanese, Spanish, and Italian legations, the club, the hotel, the bank, and the two foreign stores are grouped closely together, facing and touching one another half-way down Legation Street; and, across a once splendid bridge, the American and Russian legations face, and the British legation, adjoining, stretches along an infra-grant canal, or open sewer, that drains away from lakes in the palace grounds. The British is the largest establishment, the five-acre compound always sheltering from forty to fifty British souls or "mouths" in the sordid Chinese expression. All these European legations and the Japanese legation have their corps of student-interpreters, university graduates sent out for two years' study of the Chinese written and spoken language, the Pekingese or mandarian court dialect used by the official class throughout the empire. At the completion of their prescribed course under their minister's charge, they are drafted to the consulates, are steadily promoted in line of seniority, and retire on pensions after twenty-five years' service.

All these official European residences are maintained on a scale of considerable splendor, and the sudden transfers from the noisome streets to the

\* From China, The Long-Lived Empire. By Eliza R. Scidmore. Copyright, 1899-1900. The Century Co. Price \$2.50.

beautiful parks and garden compounds, the drawing-rooms and ball-rooms, with their brilliant companies living and amusing themselves exactly as in Europe, are among the greatest contrasts and surprises of Peking. The picked diplomats of all Europe are sent to Peking, lodged sumptuously, paid high salaries, and sustained by the certainty of promotions and rewards after a useful term at Peking—all but the American minister, who is crowded in small rented premises, is paid about a fourth as much as the other envoys, and, coming untrained to his career, has the cheerful certainty of being put out of office as soon as he has learned his business and another President is elected, his stay in Peking on a meagre salary, a sufficient incident in itself, leading to nothing further officially. The United States does not maintain student-interpreters at Peking, and the legation has so far drafted its interpreters from the mission boards.

Such interpreters, having usually given most attention to the local dialects of the people, must then acquire the elaborate and specialized idioms of the official class. Dr. Peter Parker and the great Wells Williams are the only sinologues, or Chinese scholars, who have lent lustre to the roll of American diplomats serving in China.

The diplomats in exile lead a narrow, busy life among themselves, occupied with their social amusements and feuds, often well satisfied with Peking after their first month's disgust, resentment and homesickness, and even becoming sensitive to any criticism or disparagement of the place. They have their club, the tennis-courts of which are flooded and roofed over as a skating-rink, their spring and autumn races at a track beyond the walls, frequent garden parties and picnic teas in the open seasons, and a busy round of state dinners and balls all winter.

For the nearly forty years that the

fine flowers of European diplomacy have been transplanted to Peking, they have been content to wallow along this filthy Legation street, breathing its dust, sickened with its mud and stench, the highway before their doors a general sewer and dumping-ground for offensive refuse of every kind. The street is all gutter save where there are fragmentary attempts at a raised mud-bank footwalk beside the house walls, for use when the cartway between is too deep a mud-slough. "We are here on sufferance, under protest, you know," say the meek and lowly diplomats. "We must not offend Chinese prejudices." Moreover, all the legations would not subscribe to an attempted improvement fund, nor all unite in demanding that the Chinese should clean, light, pave, and drain Legation Street. That jealousy of the great Powers so ironically termed the "Concert of Europe," is as much to blame for the sanitary situation of Peking as for affairs in Crete and Armenia.

The whole stay of the envoys at Peking has been a long story of trial and fruitless effort, of rebuff and covert insults. It was unfortunate that their residence began without the refugee Emperor being forced to come down from Jehol and receive them with honors and due courtesy, and that the long regency of the two secluded empresses continued the evasion of personal audiences, since precedent and custom soon crystallize in fixed laws to the Chinese. In the first years of their disgrace and defeat, the officials were civil and courteous, gracious and kindly in their intercourse with diplomats: but in a few years they recovered their aplomb, found their lost "face," and became as insolent, arrogant, contemptuous, and overbearing as they had been before the war, and have continued to be, save in other brief moments of humiliation and defeat, ever since.

The audience question was just reaching the hopeful and enlightened stage when the coup d'état unsettled things. There have been no social relations between the diplomatic corps and the court circle, no meeting or mingling save for the formal presentation of credentials, the dreary New Year's audiences in the palace inclosure, the ladies' audience in 1898, and the formal exchange of visits with the members of the Board of the Tsung-li Yamun, and, in general, none know less of Chinese character and life than those officially acquainted with the Emperor of China. No Chinese official dares maintain intimate social relations with the legations, even those who have appreciated and keenly enjoyed the social life and official hospitalities of London, Paris, Tokio, and Washington, relapsing into strange conservatism and churlishness, the usual contemptuous attitude of the Manchu officials, when they return to Peking. Even then they are denounced to the throne for "intimacy with foreigners," black-balled and cold-shouldered at their clubs, and persecuted into retirement by jealous ones, who consider association with foreigners a sure sign of disloyalty. Even the needy literati, who teach Chinese at the different legations, would scorn to recognize their foreign pupils on the street or in the presence of any other Chinese, and the contempt of grandees and petty button-folk as they pass one on the streets of Peking is something to remember in one's hour of pride.

During recent years, Peking has been such a hot-bed of intrigue, secret conventions, and concession-seeking, of high-handed and underhanded proceedings, that a diplomat's life has not been a happy one, nor his position a sinecure. With coup d'états before breakfast, executions over night, rioting soldiers at the railway-station, mobs stoning legation carts and chairs

at will, and telegraphic communication broken whenever the soldiers could reach the wires, the legations called for guards of their own marines in the autumn of 1898. Thirty or forty guards were sent to different European legations, but the Russian legation required seventy men-at-arms and Cossacks to protect it. Last to arrive were nine marines to defend the modest premises rented to the great republic of the United States of America, the want of actual roof-area to shelter more guards obliging the American minister to ask that the other marines should remain at Tientsin, eighty miles away. By renting a Chinese house, eighteen marines were finally quartered near the legation. This would have been farcical and laughable, humiliating to American pride only, if there had not been real danger and need for guards for the little community of foreign diplomats, shut like rats in a trap in a double-walled city of an estimated million three hundred thousand fanatic, foreign-hating Chinese, with a more hostile and lawless army of sixty thousand vicious Chinese soldiers without the walls and scattered over the country toward Tientsin.

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Every servant in a foreign establishment in Peking is a spy and informer of some degree; espionage is a regular business; and the table-talk, visiting-list, card-tray, and scrap-basket, with full accounts of all comings and goings, sayings and doings of any envoy or foreigner in Peking, are regularly offered for purchase by recognized purveyors of such news. One often catches a glimpse of concentrated attention on the face of the turbaned servants standing behind dining-room chairs, that convinces one of this feature of capital life. Diplomatic secrets are fairly impossible in such an atmosphere. Every secret convention and conces-

sion is soon blazoned abroad. Every word the British minister uttered at the Tsung-li Yamun was reported to the Russian legation with almost electric promptness, until the envoy threatened to suspend negotiations and withdraw. Willy concessionaries know each night where their rivals are dining and what they have said; whether any

piece of written paper has passed, and what has gone on at each legation in Peking and each consulate at Tientsin. Every legation keyhole, crack, and chink has its eye and ear at critical times, and by a multiplication in imagination one arrives at an idea of what the palace may be like.

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### IN THE DAY OF TERROR.\*

One memorable night during that same autumn season our village was startled by a fearful cry. "Les patriotes! Les patriotes!" and "Liberté!" rang through the streets and set the echoes trembling. The tramp of many feet and the shouts of frenzied voices filled the air. Torches flashed, displaying loathsome and angry faces; and people awoke from their peaceful slumber to know that for them the day of terror was come. The wild multitudes bore down upon noble dwellings, seized and sacked all that fell in their way. It was as if a flood of vultures had swooped upon our innocent village.

The Chevalier de la Brête had been sitting at his oriel window, the one beneath the gray gable yonder. His eyes had found no sleep that night, and he was steeped in a strange, fearful reverie when the cry roused him. He leaned out to listen, and immediately a horrible sight rose before his eyes. The seignory was surrounded by a furious mob, inhuman yells were threatening it, a black cloud of smoke curled round its base and enveloped it. Now it burst into scarlet flames, rising higher and higher, and the noble edifice towered white and terrified above the

ghastly spectacle. The south and east walls were soon ablaze. One casement after another burst open, emitting a flood of fire, and the vandals had gathered around it to witness with fiendish glee the birth of their holocaust to freedom.

The Chevalier looked aghast, but only for the hundredth part of a second. Quick he leaped from his chair—by what miracle he found strength heaven alone knows—and rushed out of his dwelling. The next instant old Jacques was beside him.

"In God's name, monsieur, whither?" he cried, laying hold of his master.

"Stay me not, but do thou follow me. A woman and a child are at the farthermost window of the north wing, and beckoning here for help. Dost thou hear?"

His eyes were luminous with a sudden rush of life. His every nerve quivered and his lips were set, as he made his perilous way to the one unattacked angle of the chateau.

Jacques, meanwhile, beguiled some half-drunken stragglers out of his path with promises of copious draughts of something better than the scorched blood of aristocrats.

When the Chevalier reached the spot, the woman's face had disappeared from the window, but the child's golden

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\* From *Tales of an Old Chateau*. By Marguerite Bouvet. Copyright 1890 by A. C. McClurg & Co. Price \$1.25.

head was resting upon the stone mullion, its white lids opening and drooping by turns between sleep and wonder, its cheeks and brow tinted a roseate hue with the reflection caught from the burning midnight sky. The height was steep. There was no stepping-stone or foothold in the wall. What then? The Chevalier cast about him almost in despair. Suddenly he caught sight of a sturdy vine that sprang from the foot of a neighboring tower. It had been growing higher and higher, even to the embrasure of the fatal window, thrusting its wiry tentacles deeper and deeper into the stone and wood for centuries. Its trunk was like a goodly tree. Its branches knotted and intertwined like a tangled net of iron. He gripped it with his slender fingers, and essayed its strength. It yielded not. Then, with heaven-born power, he swung himself aloft, and rose, clutching his way among the green foliage as fearlessly and surely as upon the stoutest ladder. In a moment more he had reached the casement and gently lifted the child upon his shoulder. Her soft arms were wound about his neck, she cooed and gurgled in contentment at finding herself in the embrace of a protector. Lightly as he had mounted he descended with his tender burden, and when he reached the earth once more, old Jacques was there waiting to bear them both away.

The old vine had yearly been growing stronger, and the Chevalier had been wasting day by day, that, through the inscrutable ways of Providence this thing might be accomplished.

At daybreak the seigniorly was in ruins, and Monsieur du Marais and his family had been captured and made prisoners. None but the mother knew that the little one lay at that hour asleep beneath the Chevalier's humbler roof.

And now the ruffians were satiated of their ghoulish revelry for a time,

and sought no further mischief to do in the name of sweet liberty. Yet we were in a very net of fretfulness the while, not knowing who might be plinked next.

But the child Madeleine, unconscious of all the strife, dwelt with the Chevalier. Her inquiries and perplexities concerning the great change that had so suddenly come into her young life were answered and soothed with words but little short of a parent's tenderness. Between her and the good Chevalier there sprang, like a flower in the night, the sympathy that comes of a common heart-grief. Out of that sympathy there grew a still more beauteous flower, the love betwixt a little child and a noble man, than which there is nothing purer or more sacred.

Some days later the vanguards of public safety, once more athirst for the blood of innocence with which to lave their own guilt, betook themselves to the precincts of Les Tourelles. There were, perhaps, not more than a dozen of them, but these were among the most rabid. They scaled the walls and would have broken into the little chalet, even as a wolf might into a sheepfold, if some invisible hand had not stayed them. I have already told you how the very air of that kindly dwelling breathed of peace and piety. I think that even those crazed, misguided wretches must have felt something of it in their wicked hearts. For, ere they had gone many steps they halted in their mad pursuit, arrested by a sight that would have melted a heart of bronze.

In the dusk of early evening a little group knelt around an altar in a quiet chamber—the child, her baby hands clasped and her eyes turned heavenward; on one side of her the young Chevalier, with a look of earnest entreaty on his delicate, saintly countenance, and on the other side old Jacques, with silvery head bowed in prayer.

Thus they had gathered at the close of each day to beseech the grace of heaven for the safety of their beloved ones. They rose as the men entered the room, and the little one clung to the Chevalier as she met the grim stare of the invaders.

"What manner of game have we here?" cried one of the leaders in a surly voice; but he laid not hand upon any one. He seemed to shrink like a snail within its shell as the Chevalier de la Brête turned upon him.

"But poor game, indeed," responded he, "for such as you, who value your prey according to the feathers of the victims. We are but humble people with just this roof over our heads, and no power on earth save that which God gives us to succor one another."

"Ha, ha, thou art a fine! a fine! I know thee by thy white hands and thy sleek tongue!" shouted several angry voices.

"A fine, if thou wilt have it so," rejoined the Chevalier; "we are not here to deny you. But think not that we shrink from paying the penalty of being born with an escutcheon. *Noblesse oblige.*"

"Art thou not, then, afraid of death?" asked the Jacobin, marvelling at his serenity.

"Wherefore should we fear? Behold these three lives. This," and he laid his hand on the fair head at his side, "hath scarce had time to learn the full value of it. And yonder gray head hath well-nigh run its course. Mine, hanging by so slender a thread, is hardly worth the living. Hast thou not thought, man, that to souls free from perjury death is but the gateway to a

brighter and sinless world? It comes to us all, soon or late. And may thou and thy fellows meet it as calmly when your own hour is near. We were but this moment commending our souls to God, and are prepared. Little one," he said, bending over to her, "thou wilt follow me gladly to Paradise, wilt thou not?"

The child nestled to him and covered his face with caresses.

"Thou art my La Brête; I will go with thee everywhere," she said, not comprehending the meaning of his words.

His spiritual strength at length yielded to his bodily weakness. He fell into his chair. The light of the half-burnt tapers shed a flickering glow upon the frail reclining figure, with its white transparent face, and upon the rosy healthful child bending over him and still holding him close. There fell a deep silence for an instant. Then a stifled sob from the heart of old Jacques broke it.

"To the cart with them!" cried one of the hardened wretches.

"Hold thy tongue, thou infernal!" commanded the chief among them. This man, who had been a leader in so many brutal deeds, felt a cold pressure about his heart. For one short second a gleam of celestial light penetrated his soul, and he was moved to human compassion.

"Turn your ways from this place," he said; "It is the abode of a saint. And the wrath of heaven be upon us if but a hair of his head perish!"

And they departed in silence from the home of the Chevalier.

## THE SMOOTH BORE.\*

Josiah served in one or another of the Vermont regiments until the end of the war, and was retired from the service with the rank of captain. He bought a right of land under a Vermont charter in the then almost uninhabited township of Danvis, and again began pioneer life in the heart of the wilderness.

Again the quick resonant strokes of his axe were echoed from side to side of a widening clearing. He rejoiced in the conquest of the forest giants, venerable patriarchs, concerning whose fate he felt no sentimental emotion. He let a flood of sunlight down upon fresh acres of virgin soil, and out of their roughness moulded grainfield and meadow. He reared the log walls of a new home, soon made truly a home by the presence of his wife.

Josiah was again an owner of oxen, also of cows and a horse, and a flock of long-legged, bare-bellied sheep that ranged the woods as untamed as deer except when fear of wolves and bears became more terrible than fear of man, or deep snow and starvation made shed, fold, and fodder more desirable than freedom. The sheep and the young cattle were turned out to range the budding and blossoming woods, and their owner was out one day with his rifle to look after their welfare, when he heard the scared bleating of the flock, mingled with the spasmodic jangle of the leader's bell. As they came tearing down the mountain path, close upon the heels of the hindermost, the cause of their flight, a gaunt she-bear, galloped at top speed, her faded, ragged coat fluttering like the tatters of a beggar. The sheep swerved aside to pass

Josiah when they saw him, but she held straight on, and when he fired, inflicting a slight wound in her head, she charged furiously upon him. He swung the gun aloft and brought it down with all his might. By good luck that he was truly thankful for he struck the beast a blow on the skull that checked her onslaught. Another brought her down quite stunned, so that he had no trouble to dispatch her, but it was the last service of the rifle. The barrel was bent, the stock broken past mending, so that it was only a question of a new gun of some sort.

Arguing the question with himself, his wife the audience, he said: "If I got tu be sech a blunderin' ol' numbskull I can't git a bead on a bear's head three rod off, I better git me su'thin' I can shoot buckshot in—a' ol' Queen's arm or a 'pateraro', mebbby. By the Lord Harry, she wa'n't three rod, an' a-comin' stret at me! But she was a-bobbin' up an' down, ju' loke a saw-mill gate. It don't signify, though. I'd ort tu ha' fetched her. Fact on't is, I guess I can't shoot a rifle no more—don't practyce none. Guess I'll git me a smooth-bore—it'll be handy for pig-ins, an' shoot a ball well 'nough for what bear an' deer an' varmints I run on tu naowerdays. If the' was any sech thing as fixin' up ol' 'Sartin Death' I wouldn't think o' nothin' else, but she's past prayin' for," he sighed ruefully, regarding the bent barrel, the broken lock, and splintered stock.

The result was that after fully setting forth the case of each weapon, he made a pilgrimage to the shop of Thomas Hill in Charlotte, the most famous gunsmith of the region; and after long consultation with that cunning craftsman, he ordered the building of a sixteen-gauge smooth-bore, with four-

\* From *A Danvis Pioneer*. By Rowland E. Robinson. Copyright, 1909, by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Price \$1.25.

foot barrel, brass mountings, curled maple stock of rifle pattern, with patch box. He awaited the appointed time of completion with the degree of patience that usually attends the gun lover while he waits possession of a new weapon, and, knowing the value of a craftsman's promise, added a week's grace thereto.

Then he halted the two-year-old helper that was to be the price, trade being chiefly conducted by barter, and set forth on foot, leading the helper.

The gun proved to be all that was promised and more than was expected. It was a beauty, according to the fashion of the day; it made a target almost as good as a rifle at twenty rods, and patterns with both coarse and fine shot that were all that could be desired. Josiah Hill was pleased enough with the gun to give it ungrudging praise, and proud to have so skilful and honest a workman as its maker for a namesake. So treading more lightly with this easiest of burdens on his shoulder, he set forth on his homeward journey, now making a target of a white patch on a beech trunk, now of an unwary crow, now of a pigeon just arrived from so far south that it had green wild grapes in its crop, while in Danvis woods the vines were but just in bloom.

He was at the beginning of the last mile, when he brought down one of these travellers from afar, and debating a moment whether he should reload with shot or ball, decided on the latter, so that he might, as soon as he reached home, show Ruby how well the new smooth-bore could fill the place of the rifle. As he was returning the ramrod to its pipes, his roving eyes caught the movement of some animal where the next turn of the road closed the forest vista. His first thoughts were that it was a deer, and that it was out of season. Then he saw that, though it was of the color, it was not of the form of a deer. It was a panther

sneaking along at a loose-jointed, cat-like trot, halting now and then to look backward with intent, alert eagerness; then resuming its slouching advance.

Josiah brought the gun to his shoulder, but could not find a certain aim at the distance, though that was not more than twenty rods. So he waited, with his head a little raised and gun muzzle lowered, for the animal to come within closer range. At fifteen rods it halted and looked backward again, and then as Josiah aimed at the curved side just behind the shoulder, it sprang lightly to the roadside, faced about, and swiftly climbed the trunk of a great maple to the first large limb that stretched out above the road, upon which it crouched, eagerly watching in the direction from which it had come.

"A-layin' for suthin'—one o' my idgit y'erlin's mebbly," Josiah whispered to himself, the eye and aim following every movement, only diverted for an occasional quick glance down the road. The last of these revealed a glimpse of a checkered blue and white sunbonnet and the flutter of a brown homespun gown, and then Ruby appeared in full view, picking her way along the edge of a muddy road, not thirty yards beyond the tree where the panther crouched, watching her with cruel eager eyes—ears pricked, the end of the tail twitching nervously, and hinder paws nestling under the belly for the leap.

"Ruby! Ruby! Stand still where you be, for God's sake!" he cried out in a sharp, strained voice that compelled her to stand stock still before she comprehended whose it was or whence it came.

The panther turned the glare of its yellow eyes full upon him at the sound; the long barrel trembled a little as it was brought to an aim, then became steady as a rock under the strain of the tense muscle, and obedient to the flash of priming spat out its shaft of

fire. A yell of pain and rage shot through the boom of the report and echo as the panther, pierced through the heart, lurched aimlessly from its perch and came down a-sprawl and half-lifeless midway between Josiah and his wife.

Still calm and collected, he began reloading as he stepped forward a pace, closely watching the great cat blindly biting and clawing the earth, and writhing and rebounding in all the contortions of feline death throes. The last snarling gasp went out, and the muscular limbs stiffened, quivered and relaxed, but he did not go nearer the motionless tawny form until his piece was reloaded. Then, with thumb on the cock and finger on the trigger he advanced and stirred it with his foot. Not a muscle gave a responsive twitch,

and he went over to Ruby, sitting in a dumb gaze, clutching the leaves with rigid hands, never moving until, when she saw her husband so near the terrible beast, she made an involuntary warning gesture.

"Thank the good Lord, Ruby!" he cried, all of a tremble now, and his voice shaking as he knelt down beside her; and she, with her head on his shoulder, fell to weeping.

"I do' know what made me, but I consalted you'd be a-coming; an' I was a-comin' aout tu meet you."

"An' I was a-comin' jest in the nick o' time, an' blessed be this gun, for she saved ye. We'll call her 'Deliverance.' Ju' look whet a beauty she be! There don't ye cry ontu her—salty tears'll rust her."

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## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

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M. Israel Levi of Paris is preparing an edition of all the known fragments of the Hebrew Ecclesiasticus. Altogether, considerably more than half the text has now been recovered.

The Alpine Journal for May printed a number of letters by Mr. Ruskin, written years ago, when he was an enthusiastic member of the Alpine Club. Among unpublished manuscripts which Mr. Ruskin left were portions of the lives of Reynolds and Turner, which he intended to write.

The late Mr. Andrew W. Tuer's collection of children's books of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and his series of horn-books, which The Athenæum pronounced the largest and most interesting collection

of children's books which had ever appeared in a sale-room, was sold at London last month. The horn-books were chiefly of the eighteenth century.

The Rev. J. M. Rodwell, who died recently at the age of ninety-five, was a distinguished Orientalist. He translated the Koran forty years ago, and he also published translations of the Book of Job and of Isaiah.

Will Carleton, Josh Billings, Eugene Field, Bret Harte and Rudyard Kipling are "favorite poets," one guesses, with Mr. Holman F. Day, whose volume of verses Small, Maynard & Company publish under the title "Up in Maine." These "Stories of Yankee Life," as their author calls them, contain some shrewd bits of practical wis-

dom along with some clever character-drawing. The shiftless Eph, who "kept three dogs," is particularly well hit off.

One of the most fascinating of the "Nugget" series, for which Fords, Howard & Hulbert are to be thanked, is the latest, "Quaint Nuggets," which consists of quotations from Elizabethan sources. The compiler, Eveline Warner Brainerd, has been particularly happy in her choice of selections from Thomas Fuller, and the reader would gladly have a bookful of just such alone. But as Hall, Selden, Herbert and Walton do not need commendation at this day, it suffices to say that the entire volume is delightful.

The second volume of Prof. Elisha Gray's much-appreciated popular science series, "Nature's Miracles," proves to be even more interesting than its predecessor. The sub-title, "Energy and Vibration," will not give to the average reader any idea of the wide range of subjects dealt with, from "noise and music" to phosphorescence and shadow, heat rays and "high explosives." The last part of the book, which treats of such warlike matters as "firing a shot" will be found timely and up-to-date. There is a brightness and flexibility in the use of illustrations which gives this series of "familiar talks" an uncommon fitness for the work for which it is designed. Fords, Howard & Hulbert.

Little books about great men are seldom so satisfactory as is Arthur Vaughn's study of Robert Browning, in the series of "Westminster Biographies" of which Small, Maynard & Co. are the American publishers. To present in one hundred and fifty small pages an outline of the events of a long life, and at the same time to trace the growth of a poet's powers and reputation was a difficult task, but

it has been admirably accomplished. The criticism of Browning's work, especially in its relation to that of his contemporaries, is discriminating and sympathetic, while the portrayal of his personality is unexpectedly vivid. The book is thoroughly readable, and promises well for the popularity of the attractive series of which it is the initial volume.

A loyal and daring maiden who dons a trooper's dress in order to warn a prince of his peril, and a lover whom her somewhat untrooper-like actions presently bring into disgrace are the central figures in Roland Macdonald's novel, "The Sword of the King." The fact that the tale is a first venture of Dr. George Macdonald's son will give it an added interest to many, but there is only a slight recognizable kinship between the works of father and son. This is a romance of adventure, full of incident, exciting, with a kindly and genial touch. It is told in a sprightly fashion by the heroine herself, whose lover is active in the cause of William of Orange, and the escapes and misadventures and complications in which it abounds make it a decidedly lively tale. The Century Co.

The spirit of Americanism will be greatly fostered by acquaintance with a record of the "Saving of Oregon," which A. C. McClurg & Co. publish. In "Dr. McLoughlin and Old Oregon," by Eva Emery Dye, a detailed account is given of the faithful and undaunted labors of the pioneers—missionaries, many of them—to whom this country owes the wresting of a great territory from British encroachments. The two heroes of this tale, which is both story and history, are Dr. John McLoughlin, the governor of the Hudson Bay Company west of the Rockies, and Dr. Marcus Whitman, the American mission-

ary, whom even the warnings of friendly well-wishers, "You can never get the women through," couldn't hold back from the perilous journey across a continent. The dealings with each other of rival or warring races, the diplomatic feats and the superhuman struggles of those early days are here carefully and graphically portrayed.

The Berlin papers report the finding of a hitherto unknown Humboldt correspondence. The collection is bound in a thick volume, and contains about two hundred letters, written in A. von Humboldt's "fine crow's-foot handwriting," full of confidential gossip concerning the Court and political and military notabilities, and references to contemporary scholars. They range from 1830 to 1840, some having been written from Berlin and some from Potsdam.

As each addition to the series of "Beacon Biographies" makes its welcome appearance, one feels the same lively interest in the sturdy little chronology which ushers in the more pretentious "Life" with such an engaging sense of its own self-sufficiency. The latest subject of biography is Commodore Decatur, and the study, by Cyrus Townsend Brady, does not lack clear appreciation of the vividly dramatic incidents in Decatur's history. As a sketch, also, of national life in the first part of the nineteenth century it is extremely interesting. Small, Maynard & Co.

Lively doubts as to the actual identity of that personage who is now figuring as the Czar of all the Russias will be likely to beset an imaginative reader of "The Black Terror," by John K. Leys. It is an ingenious and diverting tale, whose plot turns upon the spiriting away of a Russian government official, one Prince Kropenski, by the "Com-

mittee of Public Safety," and his attempted rescue by the hero, who is, of course, in love with his daughter, the Princess. The hero's sympathies—he is a young English architect—are, however, with the Nihilists, and he becomes curiously involved in one of their most audacious schemes against the Czar. The story is an exciting one, rapid in its action and reaching a conclusion quite "too good to be true." L. C. Page & Co.

A reaction against the Omar Khayyam cult seems to have set in. Mr. A. H. Miller, in an English journal, puts this perplexing question:

What can one make of a poem (or set of verses) whose supposed author may have died either in 1090 or 1126, whose poetical writings were absolutely unknown in the East—in his native Persia as well as in India—until the present century; whose text is so indefinite that it varies from 632 lines to 2064 lines, and the oldest copy of whose verses was confessedly written nearly four centuries after his death? The most devoted professor of Higher Criticism would give up such a problem in absolute despair.

*Apropos* of the question whether Dickens is still read, the "Bookworm" of The Academy says:

I find among the conventionally "educated" members of the new generation a large ignorance of Dickens. I find, moreover, among the educated members of the elder generation a marked disinclination to read Dickens over again. On the other hand, you have this undoubted demand for Dickens among the class which "takes out" books from public libraries. The conclusion is obvious. Dickens is "read," but mainly by "the people." Your "cultured" person prefers Thackeray. I do myself. But I can quite believe that Dickens, if he is conscious of his present vogue in England, is quite satisfied with the direction it has taken.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

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- Allen, Grant: a Memoir. By Edward Clodd. Grant Richards.
- Bachelors, A Book of. By A. W. Fox, M. A. Archibald Constable & Co.
- Battle of Dorking, The New. By Grant Richards.
- Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, Rambles and Studies in. By Robert Munro, M. A., M. D., F. R. S. E. Wm. Blackwood & Sons.
- Browning, Robert. The Westminster Biographies. By Arthur Waugh. Small, Maynard & Co. Price, \$0.75.
- China: The Long-lived Empire. By E. R. Seidmore. The Century Co. Price, \$2.50.
- Darwinian Armor, More Loose Links in the. By P. Y. Alexander, M. A. John Bale.
- Hamlets, Some Notable. By Clement Scott. Greening & Co.
- Holy Spirit, The Work of the. By Abraham Kuyper, D. D., L. L. D. Translated by Rev. Henri de Vries, and authorized and approved by the Author. Funk & Wagnalls Company. Price, \$3.00.
- Images of Good and Evil. By Arthur Symons. Wm. Heinemann.
- Lexicography, English, The Evolution of. The Romanes Lecture. By James A. H. Murray, M. A. Henry Frowde.
- Mafeking: A Diary of the Siege. By Maj. F. D. Baillie. Archibald Constable & Co.
- Nature's Miracles. Familiar Talks on Science. Vol. II. Energy, Sound, Heat, Light and Explosives. By Elisha Gray, Ph. D., L. L. D. Fords, Howard & Hulbert. Price \$0.60.
- No Room to Live. By George Haw. Introduction by Sir Walter Besant. Wells Gardner.
- Person in the House, The. By G. B. Burgin. Hurst & Blackett.
- Quaint Nuggets. From Fuller, Hall, Selden, Herbert, Walton. Gathered by Eveline Warner Brainerd. Fords, Howard & Hulbert. Price \$0.45.
- River of Pearls, The. A Chinese Romance. By René de Pont-Jest. John Macqueen.
- Robert Orange. By John Oliver Hobbes. T. Fisher Unwin.
- Russian Empire, The Rise of the. By Hector H. Munro. Grant Richards.
- Sanskrit Literature, A History of. By Arthur A. Macdonnell. Wm. Heinemann.
- Son of the State, A. By W. Pett Ridge. Methuen & Co.
- Spendthrift, The. By Francis Dods-worth. Grant Richards.
- Sword of the King, The. By Ronald Macdonald. The Century Co. Price, \$1.50.
- Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, The Early Poems of. Edited with critical introduction by John Churton Collins. Methuen & Co.
- Things Seen. By G. W. Steevens. Selected and edited by G. S. Street. With a Memoir by W. E. Henley. Wm. Blackwood & Sons.
- Up in Maine: Stories of Yankee Life Told in Verse. By Holman F. Day. Small, Maynard & Co. Price, \$1.00.
- Village Notes. By Pamela Tennant. Wm. Heinemann.
- Voices in the Night. By Flora Annie Steel. Wm. Heinemann.
- War and Labor. By Michael Anitchkow. Archibald Constable & Co.
- Yangste Valley and Beyond, The. By Mrs. J. F. Bishop. (Isabella L. Bird.) John Murray.

